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OZRO W. CLAPP.

1836—1918.

[The following is in the nature of an autobiographical sketch, written by Mr. Clapp as a Christmas and New Year's greeting, 1917. Mr. Clapp died in Chicago April 5, 1918. He was an interested member of the Illinois State Historical Society.]

From 1887 to 1897 my home was in New York City; business in Wall Street, mingling with bulls and bears, looking westward for patriotism.

Clapp & Company (my only son and self) issued annually our Blue Book of Leading American Exchanges. It was sent free to all national banks, all governors of states, all higher political officers at Washington. The book sailed the ocean from New York City on all steamers that carried United States mails; traversed this continent wherever the Vanderbilt system of railroads carried reading matter free to patrons.

I always voted, and in America's two largest cities. Yet was taught for seventy years to look eastward for inspiration.

The Chicago Board of Trade granted my membership April 6, 1858. Sixty consecutive dues have been paid. About 15,000 members have joined and left the exchange in the interval, leaving me the only charter and senior member. I have always conducted business on the board without a partner. On two occasions "Co." was attached, first in 1862, lasting six months; the second "Co." partnership began and ended in three months. In 1863 Judge Tuley, a man with more equity than technicality, called me to his office early one morning, saying: "I advised your partner yesterday afternoon to leave the city at once for good and never return, for if he did, you and I would put him in the penitentiary." Since then I have not known the whereabouts of either "Cos." They were never members of the Board of Trade.

Time has proven I am the oldest continuous member of any commercial exchange in America, save one New York

Stock Exchange member, who antedates me four months and seventeen days. Only thirteen members antedate my membership in the Union League Club, Chicago.

No city in Illinois antedates my birth, yet twenty-one different United States Presidents have ruled in Washington since then. Eleven of them have called my name when greeting me.

The first large city I ever saw was Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois, in 1844, containing 15,000 people (said to be Mormons). In 1845 my parents came to Chicago in a Frink & Walker stage coach, where we were told 12,088 people resided.

History reports the first white man to build a cabin and live in Chicago was a negro named Jean Baptiste Point au Sable.

Since my birth the population living under the United States flag has increased 100,000,000.

Chicago had less than 100,000 people when I chose this city to be my home. It was my majority year.

Fort Dearborn was being destroyed by order of the party in power. I had previously visited it before the Republican party scored its first defeat in 1856.

The sailing of the steamer Dean Richmond with 387 tons of grain direct for Liverpool was an important event in 1856.

The greatest event to me in 1857 was the panic, and the way every banking institution was eliminated.

I often met Abraham Lincoln in 1858 when he was campaigning for right. Saw him nominated in the wigwam, May, 1860.

It was my privilege to vote for the Rail Splitter in 1860 and 1864, and later send three substitutes to help keep the eleven truant states within the Union.

My health prevented my going to the front, but my dollars aided others to go and keep the United States flag waving from the Board of Trade on Water Street, midway between LaSalle and Wells Streets.

Four times since I was 10 years old have soldiers marched past me going to war to defend the Stars and Stripes.

Lewis Clapp, my father, never had but one child. My parents bought a claim of a Mr. Whipple on 400 acres of land

at Inlet Grove in 1836, containing a log house. Within three years the land was located in three different counties—JoDaviess, Ogle and Lee, in order named. I was born in that log house, and represent the first child born in Lee County of Massachusetts (Yankee) parents. Mother died on that land September 23, 1839. Father lived there until his death, April 20, 1880. My father and I always refused to hold any office in any corporation.

White neighbors in early days had sufficient will power to construct log cabin homes from trees in the groves, with only an ax and a jack knife. Nails, matches and candles were scarce.

Peter Cartwright, a pioneer Methodist, was the first white man to preach at Inlet in 1835. His colporteur district embraced Illinois and a portion of Wisconsin territory. He traveled on foot or horseback, often sleeping on dirt floors in sod houses or log cabins, carrying his Bible in saddlebags, which he used for a pillow at night.

There were no bridges those days. Streams carried about ten times as much water as at present.

With these bird's eye views of my environment, I am,

Sincerely yours,

O. W. CLAPP.